

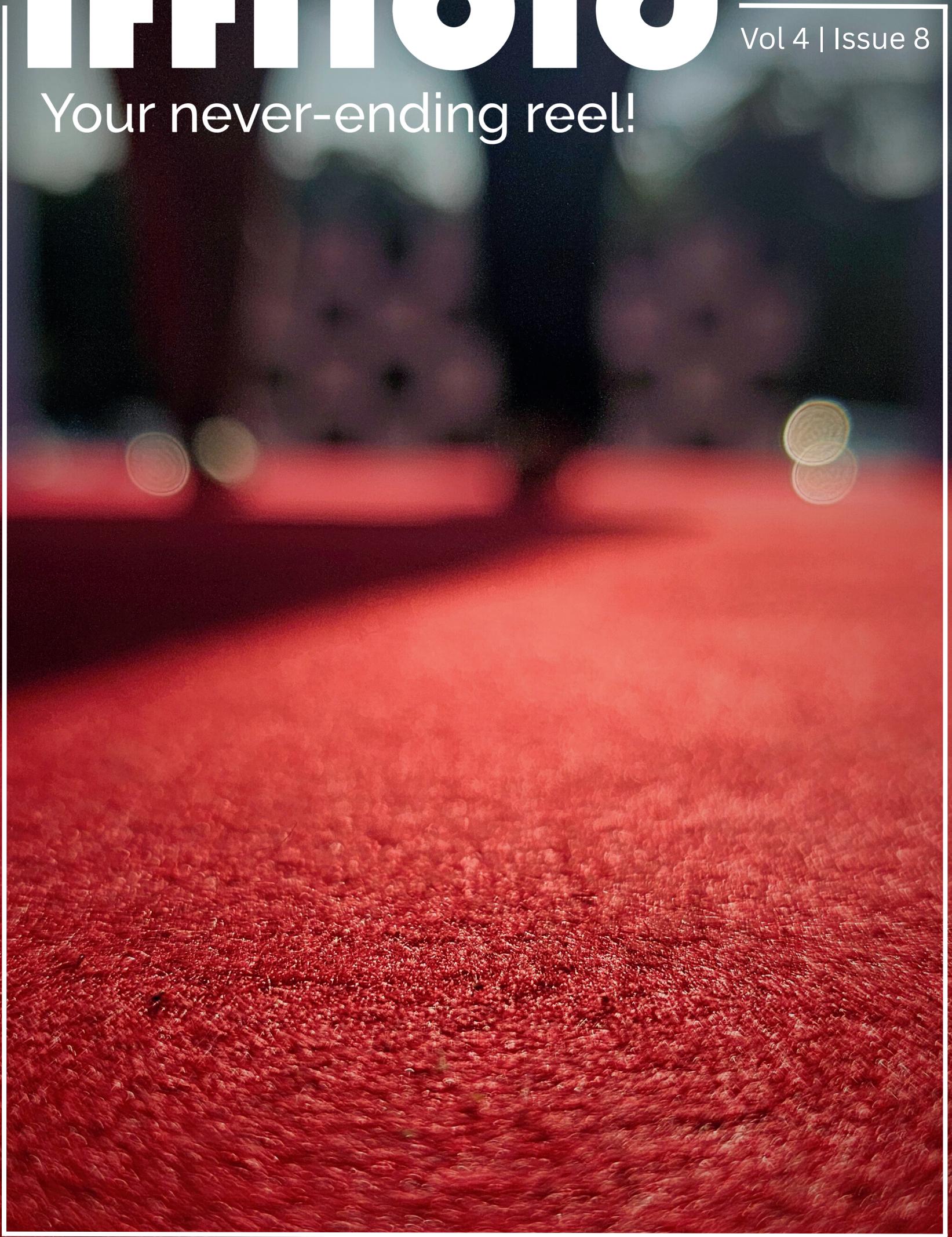
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ff56  
International Film Festival of India  
Celebrate the joy of cinema

Vol 4 | Issue 8



# IFFI Frames



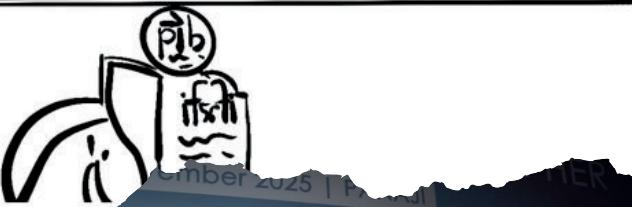
56<sup>th</sup>  
International  
Film Festival  
of India, Goa

20<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> November 2025



International Film  
Festival of India, Goa

NOVEMBER 20-28, 2025

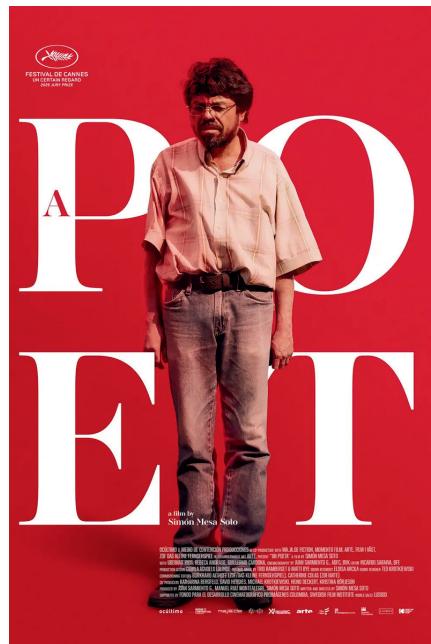


Top row (left to right): Movie excerpts screening; the corridors of IFFI; An interactive Q&A session.

Middle row: A digital artwork of the OTT Jury Press Conference designed live by audience member Sasmita Kadam.

Bottom row (left to right): Folk performance captivating the audience ; Chief Minister, Goa issues a postal cancellation; Cinema enthusiasts at IFFI.

# RACE TO THE GOLDEN PEACOCK



## SARKEET (A SHORT TRIP)

India | 2025 | Malayalam | 125' | Colour

A Short Trip (Sarkeet), directed and written by Thamar KV, is a 2025 Malayalam feature that explores the emotional fragility of a small NRI family living in the Middle East. The film centres on Balu and Steph, a young couple from Kerala struggling to keep their family steady as they navigate exhausting work routines and the daily unpredictability of their son, Jappu.

Their delicate emotional balance is constantly tested by the pressures of diasporic life. Matters take a dramatic turn when Ameer, a job seeker from Kerala who is desperate for money, breaks into their apartment while Jappu is alone. What begins as an intrusion evolves into an unexpected and accidental relationship between Ameer and the child.

Over the course of a single day and night, the film unfolds themes of silent conflict, hidden emotional wounds, and fleeting moments of tenderness. Through these interactions, Sarkeet highlights how small gestures of empathy, offered

even under strained circumstances can profoundly alter human connections.

his unfulfilled aspirations.

## UN POETA (A POET)

Columbia, Germany, Sweden | 2025 | Spanish | 120' | Colour

A Poet (Un Poeta), directed by Simón Mesa Soto, is a sharply etched tragicomedy that follows Oscar Restrepo, a once-renowned Colombian poet now living in obscurity, poverty, and emotional turmoil. Once celebrated, he now drifts through Medellín, mocked by family and forgotten by the literary world. His stagnant life begins to shift when he encounters Yurlady, a gifted teenage poet from a poor background. Recognising in her the creative fire he once possessed, Oscar takes her under his wing, hoping that nurturing her talent might revive his own lost dreams.

As Yurlady's poetic voice begins to attract attention, cultural institutions quickly move to showcase, and in some ways exploit her rising image. Oscar, meanwhile, grapples with pride, insecurity, and the fear of watching her face the same harsh artistic world that once broke him. Yurlady's grounded determination to support her family reveals a quiet resilience that inspires Oscar even as it forces him to confront

During the press conference organised by PIB at IFFI 2025, Mesa Soto discussed the deeply personal roots of the film. He shared, "The story draws from my early-life struggles and my own search for purpose as a young artist." Reflecting on the mentor-student dynamic, he noted, "Guiding someone else often makes you face your own failures and forgotten hopes." Speaking about Colombian cinema's growth, he added, "Audiences at home are finally opening up to domestic films. This project is part of that change."

A Poet ultimately blends satire, emotion, and existential reflection to explore ambition, mentorship, and the fragile pursuit of art.

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PRESS  
CONFERENCE



Gondhal, the final film in the running for the Golden Peacock, is a Marathi feature. The details are discussed in the next page.

# “HONESTY IN STORYTELLING KEEPS OUR CULTURE ALIVE”

Gondhal, a Marathi film set against the midnight carnival of the ritualistic Gondhal dance in rural Maharashtra, brings together the power of tradition and the tension of personal struggle. Directed by Santosh Davakhar, the film follows Suman, a woman trapped in an oppressive marriage who finds herself drawn toward Saheba, a charismatic Gondhali performer. As drums roar and flames rise, Suman's inner storm intensifies. Her dangerous choices collide with fate, deception and devotion, culminating in a night etched in fire, blood and awe.

At the IFFI 2025 press conference organised by the Press Information Bureau, director Santosh Davakhar shared how deeply the ritual is woven into his life. He said, “Indian culture has given a lot to Indian cinema and to world cinema. I have been seeing the Gondhal ritual since my early days, so my connection to it is natural. While making this film, I decided the ritual first and then wrote the story around it.” Davakhar also expressed satisfaction for the support extended to Marathi cinema, noting that “the Government of Maharashtra is promoting Marathi films by offering financial aid and various awards”.



Actor Kishor Kadam, who plays a central role in the film, spoke about the creative integrity behind its making. He described Gondhal as “a rooted drama with a technological experience,” highlighting its blend of authenticity and craft. Sharing his perspective on filmmaking, he emphasised, “There should be honesty while making a film and complete clarity about one's thoughts.”

Together, their insights reflect the film's essence: a grounded narrative born from cultural memory, shaped with sincerity and cinematic innovation. Gondhal stands not only as a story of a woman's rebellion and destiny but also as a celebration of Maharashtra's living traditions and the evolving spirit of Marathi cinema.

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# NEW NORTH-EAST CINEMA



A new dawn broke over Indian cinema as the vibrant voices of the North-East took centre stage at IFFI 2025's master class, lighting up the Kala Academy with stories, struggles, and hopes as fresh as the Manas morning fog. This academic panel was a celebration and a declaration that the future of Indian film is as diverse and dynamic as the hills and valleys of North-East India.

## Echoes from the North-East: Passion, Perseverance, and Perspective

The session, "New North-East Cinema: Voices, Vision, and the Future of Film Education," rang out with lived reality and honest admissions. Haobam Paban Kumar's journey stood as testament—a six-year odyssey from Imphal to the gates of SRFTI Kolkata, shadowing master filmmaker Aribam Syam Sharma just to earn a seat at the table. Back then, India's film education seemed a distant fortress,

with FTII and SRFTI as its only towers. Kumar's fundamental lesson: grit and guidance matter, but so do formal craft.

## Homegrown Stories: The Curriculum Revolution

Continuing the conversation, panelists like Maharshi Tuhin Kashyap described film school as a portal, not just to world cinema but to homeward introspection. Kashyap explained how SRFTI's atmosphere shifted his gaze from the dazzle of Bollywood to the untold treasures of Assam's culture, history, and people. He learned that stories are most powerful when rooted in the soil of one's own experience, a sentiment echoed by moderator Dominic Sangma, who relayed his own transformation from oral folklore to cinematic self-discovery through watching world cinema.

## Curriculum to Canopy: Shaping North-East's Cinematic Canons

Reema Borah recalled how, when she was a student, North-East cinema was

nowhere to be found in textbooks despite a lineage stretching from 1935 classics to the landmark "Ishanou." This invisibility, she said, is now being challenged by initiatives like the new film institute in Arunachal Pradesh. Borah celebrated the possibilities: with more institutes, North-East stories, languages, and traditions can finally journey from obscurity to the world stage, capturing national and international audiences alike.

## A Future Scripted at Home

One message remained bright: film schools do more than teach. They embolden. Today, as more North-East Indian graduates step into the limelight armed with training, talent, and a deep sense of self, a new wave of cinema rises. It's a cinema that sings in many tongues, holds fast to memory, and welcomes the world without ever forgetting home.

# ICFT UNESCO GANDHI MEDAL

Representing the enduring spirit and universal ideals championed by Mahatma Gandhi, this segment of the IFFI brings to the fore a distinguished annual selection of international and

Indian fiction feature films that resonate with the principles of peace, non violence and intercultural dialogue. Each year, a select slate of outstanding cinematic works competes for this globally respected award, established in collaboration with the International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication-ICFT, Paris and the UNESCO.



10 films are nominated this year. 5 of which were featured in yesterday's edition. The other 5 are featured today.

## 1. Tanvi The Great

India | 2025 | Hindi | 159' | Colour

Director: **Anupam Kher**

Producer: Anupam Kher Studio, National Film Development Corporation Ltd.

Tanvi The Great portrays the young 21-year-old Tanvi Raina, within the autism spectrum who lives in a world where kindness is law and music replaces words.

## 2. Mamlaket Al-Qasab (The President's Cake)

Iraq, USA, Qatar | 2025 | Arabic, Mesopotamian Arabic | 105' | Colour

Director: **Hasan Hadi**

Producer: Leah Chen Baker

Set in 1990's Iraq under Saddam Hussein's regime, in The President's

Cake, a young girl named Lamia is assigned a daunting task: bake a birthday cake for the ruler where scarcity and fear dominate daily life.

## 3. La Ola (The Wave)

Chile | 2025 | Spanish | 129' | Colour

Director: **Sebastián Lelio**

Producer: Juan de Dios Larraín, Pablo Larraín, Rocío Jadue Sebastián Lelio

Set in 2018 at a Chilean university, The Wave explores the life of Julia, a music student who is determined to participate in a feminist uprising against sexual harassment and abuse in academia.

## 4. White Snow

India | 2025 | Urdu | 80' | Colour

Director: **Praveen Mochale**

Producer: Barefoot Pictures

The film follows Amir, a young filmmaker, who faces censorship when his film depicting postpartum blood is banned by a local religious leader.

## 5. L'Illusion de Yakushima (Yakushima's Illusion)

France, Japan, Belgium, Luxembourg | 2025 | French, Japanese, English | 122' | Colour

Director: **Naomi Kawase**

Producer: David Gauquié, Julien Deris, Jean-Luc Ormières, Renan Artukmaç

Yakushima's Illusion follows Corry, a French pediatric heart transplant coordinator sent to Japan, where organ donation is culturally sensitive and often taboo.

# MIB @ IFFI 2025

Literature, art and culture form an important foundation to cinema. At the 56th IFFI, various units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) have come together to showcase these unique aspects of India's rich heritage through CBC's folk performances, DPD's literary hub, and IIMC students' enriching experiences. Through these initiatives ministry celebrate India's cultural diversity, cinematic heritage, and media education, blending tradition with global storytelling, harnessing its potential to the fullest.



**CBC dancing troupes**

Central Bureau of Communication: The Central Bureau of Communications (CBC) is showcasing India's rich cultural heritage at the 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) 2025 with a vibrant lineup of folk performances from across the country. On November 27, audiences witnessed captivating acts such as the Sinhtoo dance from Himachal Pradesh, Ram Vandana from Assam, Karagattam from Tamil Nadu, Lavani from Maharashtra, Kumaon from Uttarakhand, and Bumbro from Kashmir. It also featured the Tarpa dance from Daman & Diu, Puruliya Chhau from West Bengal, Ghoomer from Rajasthan, and Jhijhiya from Bihar. Earlier during the day,

performances included Dogri from Jammu, Gussadi dance from Telangana, Sambalpuri folk from Odisha, and Satriya from Assam. These performances celebrated India's diversity and brought alive the spirit of regional traditions, connecting cinema lovers with the living pulse of the nation's folk arts.

The Directorate of Publications Division (DPD) stall at IFFI 2025 has emerged as a vibrant hub for readers, offering Marathi, English and Hindi children's classics and literary works at attractive discounts ranging from 10% to 90%. With around 1,228 books on sale and overall sales already crossing the one lakh mark, the stall has received strong feedback from festival visitors. Film-related books are in particularly high demand, drawing cinephiles and students of cinema and ensuring a steady, enthusiastic footfall. The DPD stall has also hosted three important book launches: "Legends of Indian Silver Screen", "Epic Cinema of Ritwik Ghatak" and "Rangoli", adding intellectual depth to the festival's cultural calendar. Backed by the coordinated efforts of its sales emporia in Pune and Delhi, the stall significantly contributes to IFFI by promoting serious film literature, nurturing reading habits and connecting audiences to India's rich cinematic and literary heritage.



**Director General (WZ), PIB Smita Vats Sharma inaugurating the DPD stall**

Indian Institute of Mass Communication

(IIMC) Delhi students are attending the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa under the patronage of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, turning the campus into an extended classroom of world cinema. They are gaining first-hand exposure to global films, festival programming, red-carpet events and press interactions, enriching their understanding of how



**IIMC students at IFFI-2025**

the screen industry functions in practice. Immersed in a range of knowledge sessions, the students attended masterclasses on 50 years of Sholay, the rise of new North East cinema, and "Narrative Architect of Social Transformation" by Aamir Khan, which deepened their grasp of storytelling, culture and social impact. They also watched diverse films and attended press conferences, including sessions around White Snow, My Daughter's Hair and Pokkhirajer Dim, sharpening their skills in critique and reportage. For budding media professionals, this exposure blends theory with practice and prepares them to enter the media and entertainment industry with confidence and insight. Students from campuses of IIMC Delhi, Dhenkanal, Kottayam, Jammu, Aizwal and Amravati attended IFFI.

# TODAY'S PRESS CONFERENCES

| Time             | Film                 |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 10:30 - 11:30 AM | A Pale View Of Hills |
| 11:30 AM - 12:00 | A Useful Ghost       |
| 12:00 - 12.30 PM | Shape of Momo        |
| 12:30 - 1:00 PM  | Sarkeet              |

## Talks from IFFI...



*This is my first IFFI. I was not a cinephile at first. During the COVID lockdown I started watching a lot of movies. Later on I started following film reviews and discussions on films. Now I'm able to appreciate the collective effort that goes behind the film making process. I am looking forward to watching more movies.*

**Abha V Raj**  
Kerala



*Last time I was here with my film. This time, I am here as a delegate. What I love about watching films is that for those two hours, you are in certain space and time, so that experience is nice. It refreshes you and gives you energy to move on.*

**Mohit Sangwan,**  
Haryana